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A Prayer to St Ignatius

My true Father, St Ignatius, I pray and beseech you, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that you be mindful of us, your sons labouring in India, and obtain for us such virtue and holiness as will by its strength and brightness rouse us from our sluggishness. Since by the divine bounty you watch over our labours and intentions, I have great hopes that you will with all diligence obtain for us steadfastness of virtue and an ardent zeal for perfection.

Loving Father of my soul, on my knees before you, as though I had you present here, I pray of your holy charity to commend me much to God our Lord, that He may grant me to know His will in this life and grace to fulfil it to perfection. Amen.

(Composed from letters of St Fr. Xavier)

Inigo and Francesco¹

LOYOLA and Assisi — can they bear comparison? Ignatius could and has been compared with Luther, Calvin, Nietzsche, Lenin; but with the Poverello? Too many contrasts: 13th, 16th century; Italy, Spain; a merchant's son, a knight; bard of God, organizer and leader of men; Franciscan spring and Ignatian crusade: two different natures, different graces, different loves of Christ.

Yet, as Francis, in all his mystery, is more Ignatian than we think he is — not only gentleness and mildness, but in dead earnest to follow Christ crucified and to convert to penance the bourgeois world of his day, so also Ignatius is more Franciscan than we surmise. He is not just calculating, hard and rational (Leturia and Rahner). This is especially so during the first twenty years after his conversion, 1521-41. The 'Pilgrim's story' is very Franciscan.

1. Condensed by M. De Brouwer S.J. from F. Hillig, "Inigo und Francesco. Ein Vergleich", in *Geist und Leben* 1954, 244-53.

Inigo first dreamt of worldly glory; as Francesco had done. Francesco heard the call of Christ to His knight's service during an illness; as Inigo would do: "What Francis did, I will do also." Francesco threw away all he had for his betrothal to Lady poverty. Inigo breaks with the world and chooses poverty and penance: he becomes a pilgrim in sackcloth, an emaciated penitent, as Francis had been. They are two knights of Christ for whom penance is a sweet and noble service.

At the start of his new life Inigo did not know exactly what he wanted —as had been the case with Francis. A penniless beggar pilgrim to Palestine, sent back from Jerusalem by the sons of St Francis, he meets in Spain with prison and persecution; in jail at Salamanca he is jubilant "to wear fetters and shackles for love of God" —the perfect joy of St Francis. The same joy breaks out on his fasting trip from Paris to Rouen, when he overcomes the fear that he will collapse; or when on his way to Genoa in 1524 the French commandant takes him for a half-wit,—Franciscan note of joy and simplicity in uncompromising following of Christ.

And the idyll of Vicenza, when the companions for forty days on end lived in a house without door or windows, begged their food and slept on straw, is the Ignatian replica of the Franciscan huts of Rivo Torto. Their preaching shook the town, as had once done that of the first Franciscans. And all this time Ignatius had many visions and spiritual consolations, as Francis had been overwhelmed with holy consolation. Even Francis's Alverno and his stigmatization find a parallel in Ignatius's experience at La Storta, when God the Father gave him as companion to His crucified Son: "In Rome we may be crucified".

After 1941, Inigo apparently swerves from the Franciscan line. Francis always kept to his initial way and in heroic naivety; he, incomparable Saint, loses the sense of practical values, so much so that his order slips out of his hand. He sticks to his ideal, which the laws framed by others will save for the world.—Ignatius, on the other hand, without falling from his first ideal, in a way returns to the world in order to serve the Church. Faithful to his own grace, which is not that of Francis, he loses himself to become the instrument of God. His has been rightly called a mysticism of service. He is the Saint of the Church. And to this new ideal of service he turns all the light and strength he receives, in the mighty struggle against the power of evil. He controls ecstasy to do the daily task. His service for God's greater glory is love in action, for which he uses all available natural means —unlike Francis. Yet in both the unpractical St Francis and the practical Ignatius burns the same love —in the 'discreta caritas' of the knight of Christ, and in the knightly heroic poverty and humility of the Poverello. The two lines fuse again. One Spirit it is who works both diversity and unity. The nearer we come to the core of both St Francis and St Ignatius, the better we see that they are brothers in Christ.

The Golden Legend¹

IT is now generally recognized that the rather commonplace statement, that the Ignatian ideal and strategy is 'military', must be qualified by the consideration that in days gone by the characteristic virtue of the soldier was not discipline, but devotion to the person of a leader, whence flowed loyalty, obedience and, lastly, discipline. It is interesting to notice, for instance, that the soldier figures nowhere among the numerous illustrations of the Letter on Obedience, whereas the letter on Perfection and Zeal is full of military allusions. Ignatius's ideal could more appropriately be called 'chivalric'.

There is indeed more than a passing similarity between the Ignatian way, which many find admirable but unattractive, and the Franciscan way, which is by far the most popular ever proposed, both within and without the Church — a similarity that extends even to the material details of the lives of the two great patriarchs. They both set themselves to perpetuate the chivalric tradition of the Middle Ages, as embodied in the characteristic figures of the wandering minstrel and the knight errant. Their aim was literally Quixotic, but whereas Quixote clung to the outward trappings of chivalry and made himself a ridiculous failure, the two Saints went to the very heart of the great tradition and were unsurpassedly successful (though they also made themselves ridiculous — a fact that the world, and we also, are willing to forget and to forgive) so that to this day they are the most powerful influences in the Church, through their progeny, the most numerous among religious orders.

They may be said to perpetuate the two quasi-fundamental Christian influences, the Pauline and the Joannine. For, the heart of medieval chivalry was devotion to a person. This is, in fact, verified in every great human endeavour and achievement, but the Middle Ages had the enviable privilege of having found the right Person. This Person the modern world is once more seeking; our age has an enviable privilege too, and that is of having discovered what may be called the practical secret of personality (the ultimate mystery of which is hidden beyond natural ken in the bosom of the Trinity), namely, that personality is not that which makes a man different from others but that which makes him have more things in common with more people, and hence that it is perfected not by keeping aloof but by giving oneself, by surrender —which simply means that our personality is patterned after God's; but the world does not know this. What

1. This is the original title of the Lives of Saints to which St Ignatius owed his conversion. It is here borrowed for this summary of some ideas which, it is hoped, will form part of a larger and more complete interpretation of the Ignatian ideal, which might help to dispel the undeniable bias that exists against it as being admirable but not attractive. No references for, or explanations of, statements can be given in this brief account.

it does know now is that the ideal of personality must not be identified, as in past ages, with any particular position or even quality, with a divinized potentate, a brave captain, an artist-philosopher or a prodigious scholar; the callowest college-student of today knows that a great personality is something beside and beyond all this, that it is something at once simpler and richer. That is why we say that the modern world is seeking Christ, and that there is a call for a great revival of the chivalric tradition as rightly interpreted by Francis and Ignatius.

Looking back over the Christian era, we might say that the infant Church was swept away by the might of the Spirit straight into the unitive way. In Ignatian terminology she lived the Third and Fourth Week. St Paul, the great lover of Christ, has nothing to say of the life of Christ; he only knows Christ crucified and His triumph. The pagan world is simply bewildered by the new movement, and its frantic attempts to stem the tide only serve to accelerate the unitive process as a host of martyrs enters more fully into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord.

Then comes peace for the Church, and Christians have to live not only among pagans but with them. There comes the close proximity of sin and the desperate struggle to shake off its burden: St Anthony wrestling with the Evil One in the desert; St Benedict seeking peace in solitude. It is the purgative way, the First Week.

The Church emerges from the Dark Ages victorious over paganism, free to live its own life, to pattern it after her Divine Model. St Bernard heralds the new era, St Francis works out its programme: the Gospel comes to life. The illuminative way, the Second Week of the Church.

But Francis breaks his heart because his dreams were too good to come true. Paganism cannot be just ignored; paganism is ourselves, that part of the world and of each one of us that has not yielded to Christ. It rears its ugly head once more at the dawn of the modern age, and threatens to swallow up the patient work of centuries. It is here that Ignatius comes riding into the arena, the St George of the modern world as Newman calls him. His practical, military genius meets the enemy in open battle, on all fronts; he not only vanquishes it but brings it into subjection.

The Spiritual Exercises draw their inspiration and strength from the whole mystery of Christ and come to rest in the very heart of the mystery, the Person of the Saviour. A chivalric revival is inaugurated that finds its apt culmination in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In the Sacred Heart, broken for our sins and in glory living to God for our justification, we see expressed the whole mystery of Christ, of the Church, and of the world. All the stages of the spiritual life draw their inspiration from it, the Exercises are built after its pattern. It is the true Holy Grail of the true chivalry, the Cup that holds the price of

our Redemption, an Ideal that is at once with us, because it is of flesh, and is ever drawing souls beyond themselves in pursuit of an inaccessible MAIUS of surrender.

The medieval knight-errant in quest of the Grail was in his own quaint way a contemplative in action, a great dreamer of dreams and a strenuous man of affairs. In a providential hour Ignatius grasped the substance of the dream and found it more real and more ideal than Quixote ever suspected; he rescued the strenuous action from sterile windmill-tilting and enlisted it in the service of The Kingdom.

The 'mysterious' Orient, and India in particular, has always been admired and loved for the dreams it has dreamt. But responsible men are now asking where all this has brought our country. We are proud of our spiritual bias, of our speculative efforts, but can we close our eyes to our practical inefficiency? We do not want to jettison our cherished traditions, but neither can we afford to lag behind in the march of the nations. Such is the problem.

Could not Ignatius, in the person of his sons, teach our country, not in words only but by example, how to combine an intense spiritual life with a no less intense and beneficial activity, now truly to achieve India's age-old dream of finding God in all things and all things in God?

R. CORREIA-AFONSO S.J.

Notes on the Spiritual Exercises

C. The Four Weeks (*contd.*)

(4) *The Election*

St Ignatius prefaces the election with an 'Introduction' [169] which is an enlargement of the operative part of the 'Principle and Foundation' and can serve as an excellent commentary of the same in the very words of the author of the Exercises.

The election can bear either on the 'Choice of a way of Life' (or on any other momentous decision) or on "the Amendment and Reformation of one's way of living in one's state of life". Any Ignatian retreat must lead to some concrete resolution, albeit only the confirmation and renewal of previous resolutions.

The Directory has a good deal to say about the Election (chh. 22 to 34), and the retreat-master will do well to go carefully over it all.

A. "THREE TIMES WHEN A CORRECT & GOOD ELECTION OF A WAY OF LIFE MAY BE MADE"

First Time. One may wonder whether this First Time — when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will that a devout soul without hesitation, or the possibility of hesitation,

follows what has been manifested to it" [175]—is really as extraordinary and exceptional as is often held. If it were so, why would St Ignatius mention it at all, why should he refer the exercitant to the Third Time solely "if a choice of life has not been made in the First and Second Time" [178]? The Directory admits that "although such vocations do not now occur in so miraculous a manner (as St Matthew's and St Paul's), yet we both read of and see some instances that do in a way so nearly approach them, in the great clearness, peace of mind and sure knowledge of the divine will which accompany them, that there does not seem to be any possibility of doubt" (ch. 26, n. 1).

Could not, for instance, those be considered as belonging to the First Time who have all the qualities required for religious life and feel sure, "without hesitation or the possibility of hesitation", that God calls them, though they never made an election as described in the Third Time and possibly feel no sensible attraction but rather reluctance for religious life?

The Second and Third Times of making a correct choice are very characteristically Ignatian and throw abundant light on the purpose, strategy and spirituality of the Spiritual Exercises.

They form a diptych. The Third Time lays down in minute detail how a man who seeks God alone should feel and proceed if he is to make a correct choice. The Second Time, completed by the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, describes God acting directly and revealing His holy Will.

Second Time. This 'Time' is based on the general principle stated in the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits "suited to the First Week" [318] that "just as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us, so in desolation the evil spirit guides and counsels".

The Directory distinguishes two ways in which the experience of consolations and desolations, can be used to enlighten a man on "which of the two alternatives, about which he is deliberating, is the more pleasing to God". The first way is for him "to observe and notice to which side he is more inclined in times of consolation and tranquillity of soul and, on the other hand, to which in times of desolation" (ch. 27, n. 5). The second way—in which the exercitant himself takes the initiative—is described by St Ignatius in his own sketchy Directory "in that simile of a man presenting some kind of food to his prince, that he may find out how it pleases him. Thus the soul, with profound humility, fervent love and the desire of pleasing God, may offer to Him in the different times now one thing, now another, observing which of them is more acceptable and pleasing to Him, saying always, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?'" (ch. 27, n. 6)

We have an application of this manner of election in St Ignatius's Notes on Penance [89] and in his 'Rules with regard

o Eating': "by using (in the matter of food) the means to dispose himself (the exercitant) will often experience more abundantly within the soul lights, consolations and divine aspirations, by which the proper mean will become evident to him" [213].

Third Time. The two ways of making a choice in this Third Time are so minutely described that we need not further comment on them, except to emphasize the importance which St Ignatius attaches in each way to the offering to God our Lord of the choice made "that the divine Majesty may deign to accept and confirm it, if it is for His greater service and praise" [183, 188].

The Spiritual Diary is a moving illustration of the insistence with which St Ignatius sought divine confirmation of a particular decision and of his recognition of God's approval in the extraordinary consolations he received in answer to his prayer.

B. "DIRECTIONS FOR THE AMENDMENT AND REFORMATION OF ONE'S WAY OF LIVING IN ONE'S STATE OF LIFE"

The rules given by St Ignatius for making a choice of a Way of Life in the Third Time will prove of great utility in amending one's way of living. As a matter of fact, St Ignatius himself gives us a concrete example of such use in his 'Rules for the distribution of Alms' [338-341], the first four of which are admittedly a literal application of the first four Rules of the second Way [184-187]. Nor does he exclude resolutions for the amendment of life taken in the Second Time "through experience of desolations and consolations and discernment of perverse spirits" [176], as appears from his Notes on Penance 89] and his Rules with regard to eating [213].

Young religious generally find it difficult to draw up a sound and practical 'Plan of Life', such as they are urged to do at this stage in the course of a retreat of special importance. If they are told to direct their entire plan against their *chief* defect, they are—not unnaturally—at a loss to decide which is their *chief* defect. An experienced Master of Novices recommended to the author of these Notes the following three points for a Plan of Life:

- (a) Which is the *virtue* that *attracts* me most, and in which I am going to excel? Which means shall I use to acquire this virtue?
- (b) Which is the *defect* against which I must guard myself most, lest it lead me astray? Which means shall I use to correct this defect?
- (c) Which *motto* is there that will inspire me and spur me on?

(5) *Third and Fourth Weeks*

The more St Ignatius progresses in the Exercises, the fewer become his directions, and the shorter his Points.

We will imitate his sobriety and limit ourselves to a few stray reflections.

(a) The Third and Fourth Weeks correspond to the Unitive Way. "In the Passion it is proper to ask sorrow with Christ in sorrow, anguish with Christ in anguish" [203]; and in the Fourth Week we pray "for the grace to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord" [221].

In the Third Kind of Humility we had reached the summit of *effective* love: in the Third and Fourth Weeks we further progress in *affective* and unitive love.

(b) It is, however, noteworthy that Ignatius, who had not wished us to meditate on sin without remembering all the time the Saviour who had atoned for sin, now conversely invites us not to stop at sharing Christ's sorrow, anguish, tears and grief, but to consider also "that Christ suffers all this for my sins, and what I ought to do and suffer for Him" [197, cfr 193, 204]. St Ignatius will ever be the man of balance and spiritual realism.

(c) The notes for the Fourth Week are even shorter than those for the Third Week. The pattern of its contemplations closely follows that of the previous Week [222-223]. More still is left to the initiative and inspiration of the exercitant [225, 228] who by now ought to be an adept in the methods and principles of the Exercises and has drawn nearer and nearer to God. Therefore, more than ever "the director of the Exercises should permit the Creator to deal directly with His creature, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord" [15].

(6) "*Contemplation to attain the love of God*"

(a) The *Contemplatio ad amorem* is the crown of the Spiritual Exercises. The entire Exercises were designed to bring about a progress in love, both effective and affective. It is then quite in the fitness of things to conclude them with an exercise which aims at raising us from the contemplation of the manifestations of God's love in this world to that of the eternal Source of the manifested love, "the God of love" Himself. Not, however, that we should stop at contemplation: As long as we are mortals, "love ought to manifest itself in deeds" [230]; the Contemplation for divine love must lead the exercitant back to the most complete act of oblation and consecration to God's service inspired by the purest love.

For —and this is the last word (figuratively and literally) of the Spiritual Exercises— "what should be esteemed above all is the zealous service of God our Lord out of pure love" [370].

(b) The 'Contemplation to attain love' may also be considered (as several commentators have pointed out) as a transition from the intense contemplative life which we have been living to the real, concrete life to which we are about to return. It teaches us how to find and love God in all creatures, and all creatures in God; how to become contemplatives in the midst of action.

It is a commentary from St Ignatius's own hand of his exhortation "to seek God in all things, casting off as much as possible all love of creatures, that they may place their whole affection on the Creator of them, loving Him in all creatures and them all in Him, according to His most holy and divine Will" (Reg. 17 Sum. Const.).

This contemplation brings us back to the Foundation. With it the cycle is completed: it is the contemplative's conception of the Foundation. It sees all creatures in God, as blessings of God (First Point), tabernacles of God (Second Point), ever actual handiworks of God (Third Point) and expressions of the divine Beauty (Fourth Point).

Here our love no longer laboriously climbs from creatures to God: it reverses its movement. "The love that moves me (towards creatures) descends from above, that is from the love of God" [184]; I become "conscious within myself that God is the motive of the greater or lesser love that I bear to (creatures) and that God is manifestly the cause of my loving them more" [338].

J. B. MOYERSOEN S.J.

Experience of the Discernment of Spirits in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius¹

MANY appreciate the dynamism of thoughts and the progression of ideas in the Spiritual Exercises, but very few keep more than a faint remembrance of the discernment of spirits. This is most probably due to the fact that the Exercises are no more gone through individually, but are now practically always given in common retreats. Hence personal direction has been replaced by preaching to whole groups. Yet, besides the series of meditations and spiritual activities proposed by the retreat-master, there belongs to the essence of the Spiritual Exercises the examination by the retreatant of the various motions roused up in his soul and his purifying them in order to find the will of God concerning his personal spiritual life. Therefore the aptitude of the retreat-master must be judged as much by his gift for discerning the spirits and advising individuals, as by the profundity of his doctrine and the brilliancy of his exposition. The originality of the Ignatian Exercises consists even chiefly in the examination of the various interior "tastes" that arise during the meditations. The discernment of them is not so much reached by a clear and distinct judgement; it is rather like "a sense of the soul", trained by daily practice, which pronounces about the origin of such motions.

1. Condensed and translated from the article of Jean Laplace in *Christus*, No. 4, Oct. 1954, by R. Van de Walle.

Following the steps of this spiritual pedagogy, let us see how we pass from the behaviour of a child to that of an adult in the spiritual life.

Starting-Point

In the beginning, the novice is all fervour and full of good will, impatient to proceed. Meditating on sin, his carnal nature might feel reluctant to allow the irruption of divine thoughts,—the evil one provokes sadness and anxiety [315] —but still, sometimes he is so taken up by the divine love that, even when he bewails his past sins, he experiences a great calm wherein everything appears simple and he feels faith, hope and charity increase in his soul. This is a time of consolation [316]. At this period his fervour must be checked and all excesses restrained. As a matter of fact he is unable to keep up such an enthusiasm and suddenly everything changes: he feels in himself a resistance, coming from the devil or from his exhausted temperament. Unexpected temptations, sloth, weariness assail him, he feels himself abandoned by God and grows anxious about this sudden and total change. He is in spiritual desolation [317]. The spiritual director must then reassure him. These floods and ebbs are the symptoms of the invading sea of divine love, and there is nothing to be shocked about. On the contrary, if there were no spiritual motions whatsoever, the director should have to question his spiritual child about the fidelity with which he performs the exercises. Or if there is a persistent state of exaltation or depression, he may have to deal with a visionary or a neurasthenic! In themselves, these suddenly alternating impulses are but a sign of awakening life. Still the experience of a spiritual guide will be most useful for the beginner.

On the Purgative Way of the First Week

A youth of the twentieth century will find it very difficult to admit that his soul has become the battlefield of spirits, both good and evil; he expects his spiritual adviser to tell him that all these motions are but the expression of his human nature as such. St Ignatius, in his rules for the first week, does not grant him this: spiritual pedagogue that he is, he wastes no time in investigating the origin of such feelings, but at the present stage looks only for what will be useful for the future and keeps only in view the spiritual progress.

The novice still attaches too great an importance to the sensible and would exhaust himself by trying to analyse and check his feelings: it will be more fruitful that he make use of them in order to transcend and sublimate them. In the generosity of his first fervour let him rather purify and direct his sensitive nature than try to repress and deaden it.

In his recurring periods of consolation he must not give way to rash precipitancy nor make promises at the first inspiration.

The director, when advising him, should take account of the character of the exercitant and also of which aids or hindrances one may find in fulfilling his promises [14]. " Every motion from God is not necessarily the expressed will of God ", as Father Surin puts it. If the retreatant changes anything at all, it should be for a few days only, by way of experiment [89]. Keeping always the aim in view, he should from this consolation get fresh strength for future desolation [323] and humble and lower himself so that the ardent enthusiasm of consolation should not lead him into illusion [324].

On the other hand, when going through one of the dark periods of trial, the beginner should not retract or change any of his previous decisions [318]. He must patiently wait till this night is over [321] or rather he should insist more on prayer and on increasing his penances in a suitable way [319]. Making use of this trial as a means for self-knowledge and self-purification, let him consider the purpose God may have in sending it to him [322]. Far from being panic-stricken, let him reflect that God wants to test him by leaving him to his natural strength [320] and let him nurse the thought that he will shortly be consoled [321]. In this way a big step is taken towards tranquillity of soul.

Saint Ignatius gives also some tips about the tactics of Satan, " the enemy of our progress " [333]. Working on their sensibility, he tries to instil fear in those who are in their spiritual infancy, by shouting and raging; but if they put up a bold face, " he takes to flight and loses courage " after the fashion of a woman [325]. Then again Satan will try to isolate the beginners so that, in the night of their solitude, he may be able to play on their imagination and give fantastic proportions to their fears; but if they seek the advice of a prudent and experienced director, the enemy will be highly displeased [326]. Also, as a shrewd strategist, Satan explores their weak points, that is: inordinate affections [327]. With people who know themselves but imperfectly, these simple tactics are always most successful. But if they realize what is going on in their soul and concentrate their efforts against his particular attack, they have already defeated Satan, that is, they have pulled off his mask. They are now entering their spiritual manhood.

At first they were put out by these alternations of joy and sadness; but in their struggle to transcend them they have purified their sensibility: after this struggle of spiritual puberty only lack of courage could now keep them back from—

The illuminative way of the second week.

Along this road, joining the company of Christ the King, the danger is no more fear but error. If the action of the will was indispensable to purify the senses, it is now rather the intellect which must act to perceive and understand the new tactics of Satan.

One clear sign that one has reached this second stage is the appearance of a new type of temptation "under the semblance of good" [10]. True consolation consists of a true joy and spiritual gladness [329] which is so pure that the soul is no more influenced by desolation; the work of the enemy will now be to assault the delicate soul with doubts and scruples, to make it reason excessively without any conclusion [329]. But if he cannot stop its progress, he tries to make it deviate: He apes the action of God, hoping that we will surrender to consolation without any afterthought. Like Saint Peter we too are ready to follow Christ even unto death, but also like him we branch off and diverge: "Never, Lord, no such thing shall befall Thee!". It is the very understanding of the Kingdom that is at stake; the enthusiasm and fervour of the beginning no longer suffice. Unless we give the blind obedience of faith, we shall have to hear Jesus's reproach: "Away, Satan!" Without our constant watchfulness, Satan will sift us like wheat and may bring us to the triple denial. It is now that the typical Ignatian meditation of the Two Standards finds its place. By an effort of the intellect we must sift our own thoughts and the interior states of our souls [336] in order to detect the "serpent's tail" [334]. Watchfulness is especially required during the time which immediately follows consolation, for it is then that our temperament and our innate way of judging and acting re-appear.

But mere self-knowledge could remain purely human wisdom, and progress become an attempt at beating records. Hence we must have an external norm to fall back upon: the law of the beatitudes and of the cross. Besides, at this stage, a last danger might arise in the form of slothfulness. Thinking that he has reached high enough in his spiritual life, the exercitant may relax; and at once illusions, false virtues and pretended devotedness creep in. He has to cross this pass, too, and step on, in humility of spirit, unto the Folly of the Cross. After some time the spiritual light will become so bright that the soul finds joy in the cross, or at least begins to surmise that the humility of Christ is the precious pearl for which everything must be sacrificed. Now the exercitant is really free and his judgement is clear and true: The time has come for—

The election

His sensibility has been purified, the glowing fervour of the first consolations or the depressive sadness of sudden desolations no longer affect him deeply, and his natural faculties are attuned to the humiliations of Christ. His will therefore is disposed to desire the very thing which God wants from him; and the peace which will follow his decision will be a certain sign of God's acquiescence. Set free by the cross, the exercitant has thereafter only to put his trust in the Crucified and, through the cross, he will taste the joy of the resurrection and of the divine

love: the third and fourth weeks confirm him in his decision to follow Christ whither he is called by Him.

Conclusion : experience and direction

This brief survey should suffice to show the importance of the discernment of spirits. Without it the Spiritual Exercises are but an occasion to pray in silence, to examine one's conscience and to make a good confession. With the discernment of spirits the exercitant will have gone through an abridged and so to say "germinal", but none the less true, experience of a Christian life.

As regards the spiritual directors, they will be unable to give any fruitful guidance, unless they themselves have gone through a similar experience. The Spiritual Exercises are not a kind of nostrum that will succeed "ex opere operato". They are worth what the experience of the retreat-master is worth. In fact, St Ignatius considered but few of his companions fit to direct retreats. Besides all the qualities of a good pedagogue, the spiritual director must have the delicacy required to bring his spiritual child under the direct influence of the divine spirit and the firmness and patience to make him wait for the hour of God and keep him away from all side-tracks and compromises.

But, however much the exercitant trusts in his master, ultimately he must experience everything himself. The habit of discerning the spirits is the habit of attuning or focussing the free activity of a man who is capable of desiring by himself—without any constraint—what God wants. St Ignatius's method is not a kind of morbid introversion, but an effort towards truth so that man, free from illusions and with the right perspective, may take the place assigned to him by God and serve the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christ in the spiritual experience of St Ignatius¹

THE beacon-light that guided Ignatius onto his spiritual path was also the flame that consumed his whole life: a passionate dedication to our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal King.

At Loyola and Montserrat the old soldier discovered Christ as the Model and Master of heroes. It was an authentic spiritual experience from which he derived a revealing interior knowledge of the Saviour even whilst little instructed in the ways of the spirit. Manresa then provided a stern schooling, bringing him to a life of familiar intercourse with our Lord who frequently

1. D. Mollat S.J., "Le Christ dans l'expérience spirituelle de saint Ignace", in *Christus*, I, 1954, pp. 23-47. Condensed by P. De Letter S.J.

appeared to him. Five special graces mark this stage, five bright lights on the Trinity, on Creation, on the Holy Eucharist, on the glory of Christ's humanity and lastly, in the dazzling vision of the Cardoner, on all things divine and human. His world-vision is now Trinitarian, and radiating from the centre of the universe is the humanity of Christ, hidden in the Eucharistic mystery and calling him to His service.

In the Holy Land Ignatius retraces in actual poverty the steps of the Saviour, conversing with Him the while in his heart with trustful and loving familiarity. But soon we find him back in Europe, burning with zeal for the salvation of souls. What will he do?

There follows a long period of studies, a bold and —except in retrospect— almost crazy adventure; but he makes the experience, at Alcala, Salamanca and Paris, of sharing in the disgrace and injuries of the Passion, whilst his spiritual consolations and visions diminish.

Now he is a priest, and for some time lives with his companions the charming idyll of evangelical poverty and love, in the country-side of Vicenza. Once again he enjoys great supernatural visitations of the sacred and glorious Humanity. When finally the 'Companions of Jesus' turn to Rome, Ignatius's prayer to the Virgin is heard, that she should 'place him with her Son'. At La Storta he receives the grace of transforming union: the Father places him with His Son, with Jesus Christ carrying His Cross and promising to be with him in Rome. This experience was for Ignatius what the Stigmata were for the Poverello of Assisi. By the Father he is united with the Redeemer, sharing in the Trinitarian life, and mystically dedicated to the service of divine charity. It is a sacerdotal mysticism.

Rome finds Ignatius ready for the final stage of his spiritual odyssey: the help of souls, the service of Christ and His Church. "To co-operate within the Church in the work of Christ, to be consumed within the Church in the service of souls redeemed by Christ, to be at the beck and call of the Vicar of Christ, to live and breathe only that he might render, in and through the Church, honour and praise to Jesus Christ our Redeemer" — such is now Ignatius's ideal. For him Christ is the Church, which he sees as the Kingdom rather than as the Body of Christ. For him Christ is the Lord of the Church. She and the whole world are linked with Him in their essential being, by creation and redemption. Christ is the eternal King, and the divine power permeating the whole of creation is His glory. It is in the Church that this power and glory unfold. The Ignatian apostolate is a collaboration in that epiphany. His service is now an interior fidelity to grace and a sort of fusion in love of his human will with the divine will. And this transformation takes place within the Church, which is the warrant of perfect union with God because the Church is the dedicated spouse of Christ.

Ignatius's experience of Christ in his later years may be gauged from his spiritual journal. His devotion to the God-Man is closely linked with the Eucharist and is extraordinarily affectionate. It is also essentially Trinitarian: the Blessed Trinity grants him to see and sense Jesus present. The Trinitarian perspective characterizes the entire growth of Ignatian mysticism, of which union with the crucified Redeemer is the living core.

Thus grace led Ignatius into the depths of the Mystery of Christ. "His spiritual experience is nothing else than an increasing awareness of the divine love which is ever present and active in the world 'sent down by the Father of all who gives light' (James 1, 17) through Jesus Christ and the Church, a co-operation with His work, a docility to His Spirit."

St Ignatius — Recruiting Officer of Christ's Army

FATHER C. C. Martindale in his beautiful series of short lives of Jesuit Saints —aptly entitled "In God's Army"— assigns to St Ignatius the rôle of "Commander in Chief". In fact the very name given to his band of followers by St Ignatius himself—"Company of Jesus"—was a military term, and from the beginning the Founder has been rightly described as "Captain", "General", "Commander in Chief". As such, Ignatius was remarkably successful in enlisting recruits for "Christ's Army": it is this quality that the present essay aims at bringing out.

The 'Recruiting' idea was probably for a long time hatching in St Ignatius's mind before it came to the surface in practical life. In the Meditation of the Kingdom of Christ and in the Two Standards we have presented to us vast Recruiting Programmes in simple but highly dramatic form; yet both these great pictures date from the days of Manresa, and count among the oldest ideas in the conception of the Saint. Their practical implementation, however, only dawned on him later in life.

This is an example of one of those *rationes seminales*, of which St Ignatius's mind was a veritable storehouse: a number of great ideas sprouted there which sometimes took unpredictable forms when fully developed. For that reason, among others, the mind of St Ignatius repays careful study as few human minds do.

According to Polanco's testimony, written between the years 1547 and 1548, and referring to the return from Palestine to Barcelona, "He began thence to feel desires of having some persons joining his company, that they might follow the designs which he already had of aiding in the reform of the faults which he had observed existed in God's service, and that they might be like Christ's buglers". In the language of those days "God's service" almost invariably means "religious life". But even so Ignatius's future was by no means clear to him.

From the Autobiography it appears that the Saint had no thought of founding a new religious order. He might reform an old one or remain a secular priest, but in any case he wanted companions. In a mass of ideas, mainly still amorphous, one had then taken shape —the recruiting idea. However, when he set out to gather a group, his appeal was insufficient. To all appearances he was but a saintly beggar who was himself in need of assistance. Though he knew some persons of influence, he had no results to show whereby the youth of Barcelona might be moved to follow him. Nor did he get much further in Alcala, Salamanca and, to some extent, even in Paris, though in each place he made some contacts that bore fruit in time. It was his inability to influence people in any other way —at any rate to his satisfaction— that moved Ignatius to proceed relentlessly with his studies. Relentlessly too he clung to his purpose of “drawing to himself other companions who had the same mind, without losing those whom he had already won”. “He decided to go to Paris, and arranged with them that they should remain behind, and he would go ahead, and see if a way could be found how they too could follow and study.”

It is interesting to hear from Polanco that health was not the only reason that brought Ignatius once more to Spain. “It was his intention to win back, if God so wished, those companions he had left in Spain before, or who from Paris had returned to Spain, as were Arteaga, Calixto, Peralta, Castro; none of them, however, was prepared to follow him.” The passage tells eloquently both of Ignatius’s determined purpose and of his failure to reach it. But the whole world knows how amply he was recompensed in Paris for his earlier disappointments. Nevertheless the recruiting officer is not satisfied.

No sooner does he reach Venice than he makes contacts among the important ecclesiastics of the city, such as Peter Contarini and Gaspar de Doctis; he fails, however, to win the friendship of the headstrong John Peter Carafa, the future Paul IV.

In Venice Ignatius is rejoined by his first faithful band of followers and on November 18th, 1538 (says the first of them all, Peter Faber) “We offered ourselves as a sacrifice to the Supreme Pontiff Paul III, that he might decide how we could serve our Lord Jesus Christ for the spiritual improvement of all men who are under the authority of the Apostolic See”. Ignatius had succeeded in bringing reinforcements ‘Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae’.

He now repairs to Monte Cassino and brings back Francis Estrada, soon to be one of the most eloquent preachers in Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. In Rome he makes a bid for no less a person than Philip Neri, but fails to win more than his lasting friendship. So too does he fail later when from behind his desk at his headquarters he tries with consummate tact to enlist in the Society the apostle of Andalusia, John of Avila.

But by now his recruiting instinct has been transmitted to his sons. Lainez is credited with about a dozen candidates from the University towns of Northern Italy. Faber has to his credit Peter Canisius and, to some extent, Francis Borgia. Thus did the Commander in Chief see a whole phalanx rise by his side.

Francis Thompson has this interesting remark: "Ignatius might well think that the prosperous soil for his future Order lay in the Kingdom of Charles V, whose empire overshadowed Europe." Obviously, St Ignatius could hardly have entertained such a thought when at Alcala. But was it not possible that he did entertain it at Paris and Rome? With very few exceptions, his recruits were all Spaniards. So it was at Paris; so it was in Italy. Francis Thompson's insinuation, however, may have had more than one explanation.

Except when he gave the Exercises to scholars like Doctor Mazurier in Paris, or Peter Contarini in Venice, with whom Latin was the readiest medium of communication, St Ignatius spoke Spanish with his exercitants, because he was not at home with the French or Italian languages. And it is through the Exercises that his recruiting was done.

Spaniards were then to be found everywhere outside Spain. Consciously or unconsciously he may have considered those Spaniards as already possessing some of the qualifications highly desirable in a member of his Order. One such qualification was sound internationalism. Men who had left their country for further studies, for joining courts in foreign lands, or from some other such motive, would not find it too difficult to give up their own country for the highest of motives — a religious vocation.

True, better than anybody else St Ignatius knew that some of the persecutions he encountered, at Paris and Rome for instance, had been raised by Spaniards, among them Miguel Landiar, Francis Mudarra, and a certain Barrera, who all of them had reasons to treat Ignatius better than they did. But on the other hand, he had to rely on his Spaniards for many a difficult task, and they proved quite worthy of his trust. To go to India he found no better man than Xavier. When the Pope asked for theologians for Trent, he had Lainez and Salmeron at hand. And among the nearest to his first companions, he found a Nadal who could go round Europe and publish the Jesuit Constitutions, Polanco for a most capable Secretary, a Ribadeneira who, even as a boy gave promises of becoming an outstanding Jesuit. "If Spain were an unfit cradle," writes Francis Thompson, "it was, however, rich in material for the Order. It could give its chivalrous nobility, and, above all, that ardent mysticism, that grasps religion as an intimate human matter which distinguishes the country of St Teresa and St John of the Cross."

TH. MOLINA S.J.

A Self-Portrait (6)

ANIMI MAGNITUDO AC FORTITUDO
Magnanimity and Courage

I. Necessity of these virtues

"Magnanimity and courage also he greatly needs for the support of many a one's weakness, for the undertaking of great works in the service of God and tenacious perseverance in them if need arise: that he may not lose heart in the face of opposition (however high-placed or mighty the opponents) nor allow any entreaties or threats on their part to divert him in his conduct from what reason and God's service command; that he may, in fine, stand fast through all occurrences and not be carried away by success nor depressed by adversity; but ever ready even to lay down his life, if required, for the Society's good under the banner of Jesus Christ our God and Lord." (Const. P. IX, c. 2, 5)

1. To inspire holy desires and great works

(a) St Ignatius was a man of infinite desires. His ambition was to work with Christ for the establishment of His kingdom in the whole world, in all human hearts. His motto was, "Ever More": ever better service of Christ, ever greater glory to God. He says somewhere, "bonum quo universalius eo divinius": that was his norm, the divine.

Ignatius was anxious that his sons too should foster 'sancta desideria': the General's prayer must be 'full of desires' (P. IX, c. 6, A); the Rector must sustain the whole college by his prayers and 'holy desires' (P. IV, c. 10, n. 5); all must help their neighbour by their 'holy desires' (P. VII, c. 4, n. 3). The place assigned to 'holy desires' in Ignatian spirituality and in Jesuit prayer is remarkable. Holy desires betray great souls. We are what our desires are, and "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for holiness, for they shall have their fill" (Matth. 5/6).

(b) It required a great soul to conceive the founding of an order like the Society of Jesus, dedicated to an intensive apostolate, pledged to measure its rules and activities by the sole consideration of the greater praise and service of God our Lord; an order whose field of apostolate would extend, on principle, to the whole world and preferably to its most arduous and derelict parts; whose ministries embraced all forms of apostolate likely to procure the greater good of the greater number of souls.

It required a stout heart to carry into execution so big and revolutionary an idea, particularly at a time when all innovations were suspect in higher ecclesiastical circles.

Few men dare to undertake great things, because they are afraid: afraid of the effort, of difficulties, criticisms, opposition and failure. Not so Ignatius. Polanco testifies that the dis-

inictive trait of Ignatius's whole nature, and of his piety too, even in the dark days of sin and worldly life, was magnanimity of soul, deeply planted urge to carry out difficult enterprises, combined with an unerring prudence.

2. *To persevere in difficult undertakings*

"Not losing heart," comments St Ignatius, "in the face of opposition, however high-placed and mighty the opponents; nor allowing any entreaties or threats of theirs to divert him in his conduct from what reason and God's service command". A soldier's heroism needs to last only a few moments, but the little Sister of the Poor must die to herself every day of her life; only the very generous and stout-hearted are ready for such a life-long self-sacrifice.

Nothing is more necessary in an apostle than magnanimity and courage, always to go on, or start anew again and again, in the teeth of opposition, slander and ingratitude, in spite of difficulties, errors and failure.

"Fortitude" is the virtue which the Breviary most praises in saintly apostles. It characterized St Ignatius. From the day he determined to turn to the apostolate and gather around him a band of like-minded youths, until the close of his life, he waged an unrelenting struggle against suspiciousness, misunderstandings, jealousies, routine and reaction. Never did he despair or throw up the sponge where God's interests were concerned.

3. "*To stand fast through all occurrences, and not to be carried away by success nor depressed by adversity.*" When Ignatius admitted that, should the Society be destroyed, a quarter-of-an-hour of prayer would suffice to restore the peace of his soul, he gave an instance of what he meant by that standing fast through all occurrences which he demands of the Superior General of his Society.

The secret for attaining this equanimity in good and ill fortune he has masterly described in his Rules for the Discernment of Spirits: "He who experiences consolations should take care to humble himself and lower himself as much as possible. Let him recall how little he is able to do in times of desolation, when he is left without such grace or consolation. On the other hand, one who suffers desolation should remember that, by making use of the sufficient grace offered to him, he can do much to withstand all his enemies. Let him find his strength in his Creator and Lord." [324]

4. *To support many a one's weakness*

It is not enough for a pastor of souls to bear patiently, humbly and kindly with the defects and sins of those entrusted to him: he must also sympathize with them, share their trials and sorrows, support them and help them rise above themselves and overcome their weakness.

That is the way a father acts towards his children. That was the way St Ignatius behaved towards his sons, —like a father, nay, on the testimony of Ribadeneira, like a most affectionate mother as well.

5. To be ready even to lay down one's life for the Society

"The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" (John 10/11). "This is the greatest love a man can show, . . ." (John 15/13). No lesser love does Ignatius expect of his General, who must be 'most willing —paratissimus— to suffer death for the good of the Society in the service of Jesus Christ our God and Lord'.

To Ignatius was not granted the grace and joy of a martyr's death, as the vision of La Storta, near Rome, had first made him hope and expect, and as would be granted to hundreds of his sons; but he gave to the Society all he was and had received from God, his spirit, his heart, his every moment till his last breath; he did give it his life, not all at once, but drop by drop through many long years of whole-hearted service and anxious care.

II. Sources of these virtues

Magnanimity and courage spring from the two sister virtues that are emphasized most in the Spiritual Exercises, —humility and love.

1. *Humility*, the consciousness and acknowledgement of our misery and helplessness, which cause us to place all our trust in Him alone who delights in helping those that are in need and call on Him; who chooses "what the world holds foolish so as to abash the wise; what the world holds weak so as to abash the strong" (1 Cor., 1/27).

"My grace is enough for thee" says the Lord to St Paul, "my strength finds its full scope in thy weakness" (2 Cor. 12/9). "Give me thy love and thy grace, for this is sufficient for me" [234] re-echoes St Ignatius, and he would fain have continued with the Apostle of the Gentiles, "More than ever, then, I delight to boast of the weaknesses that humiliate me, so that the strength of Christ may enshrine itself in me... When I am weakest, then I am strongest of all" (ibid. 9-10).

2. *Love*. Ignatius must have felt a thrill each time he read in the Imitation of Christ the words that so well expressed his own sentiments: "The noble love of Jesus impels to great deeds and arouses a constant desire for greater perfection. Love longs to soar and will not be held down by things that are low. Love often knows no measure, but is fervent beyond all measure. Love feels no burden, counts no pains, exerts itself beyond its strength, talks not of impossibility; for it thinks all things possible and permitted." (Bk 3, ch. 5).

Cum permissu Superiorum